exception of USA, for phasing out these QRs USA filed a dispute against India in WTO and the Dispute Settlement Panel ruled against India. India filed an appeal before the Appellate Body of WTO against the findings of the Panel but the Appellate Body also upheld the findings of Panel. Both these Reports were adopted by the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB). Consequently, a bilateral Agreement was signed between India and USA for determining the reasonable period of time for implementing the rulings and recommendations of DSB. As per the Agreement, QRs on 714 items have been removed with effect from 1-4-2000 and QRs on remaining 715 items are to be removed by 1-4-2001.

USA is not maintaining any Quantitative Restrictions on imports on account of Balance of Payments reasons . However, USA maintains import restrictions on textile products in form of 'quota'. As per the Agreement on Textile and Clothing of WTO, all members including USA are obliged to remove these restrictions in a phased manner. These restrictions are to be completely removed by 1-4-2005.

Apprehensions have been expressed in certain quarters regarding the adverse impact of import restrictions removal on 714 items on domestic producers. These fears are premature, as the imports are being closely monitored and government would strive to ensure, through appropriate use of tariff mechanism that imports do not cause any serious detriment or injury to the domestic industry.

The Special Economic Zone scheme announced in the new export-import policy is a WTO compatible scheme, which has been widely welcomed by all, including various state governments. Proposals have been received from some of the state governments for setting up such zones in their states.

Changes in the duty entitlement Passbook Scheme

4455. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) what are the changes made in the Duty Entitlement Passbook scheme introduced in the Exim Policy; and

(b) what will be the savings expected to be made out of the changes ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) In the revised Exim Policy announced on 31-03-2000, some changes have been made in the Duty Entitlement Passbook

Scheme. These are abolition of pre-export DEPB scheme, rationalisation of DEPB rates to account for the changes in customs duties, fixation of Caps on certain items but without verification of Present Market Value (PMV) on such items and removal of threshold limit of 20 crore for fixation new DEPB rates.

(b) The above steps have been taken as part of export promotion measures and also as part of simplification of procedures. It is, however, not possible to quantify at this stage the savings, if any, likely to accrue at a consequence of these changes.

Agenda for next World Trade Body Meeting

4456. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) Whether India proposed to raise the issue of E-commerce, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and domain names in internet at the next World Trade Body meetings; and

(b) if so, the measures taken to persuade other developing countries to raise issue along with India ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b) World Trade Organisation has established a work programme to examine all issues related to trade in global electronic commerce in Council for Trade in Goods, Council for Trade in Intellectual Property Rights, Council for Trade in Services and Committee for Trade and Development. India has actively participated in the discussions. India's concerns are with respect to issues relating to the developmental dimension of electronic commerce, applicability of existing WTO rules to electronic transmissions, domain names, jurisdiction and enforcement of intellectual Property Rights (IPR), etc. India would like the work programme to address these concerns. However, the discussions are still in initial stages and India will continue to seek support from other countries with a view to project and protect our interests.

Protection to Agriculture Sector

4457. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) Whether it is a fact that free imports of some items allowed in the new Exim Policy are likely to adversely affect the agriculturists and farmers in the country;